



**Sedimentology of China** (2nd ed.), edited by Feng Zhengzao (with four Associate Editors and 18 Members of the Editorial Committee), 2013. Petroleum Industry Press (Beijing) [order through the Journal of Palaeogeography: Jpalaeo2012@163.com]. Two volumes, hardback, 1,792 pages. Price CNY 880.00, USD 141.50, EUR 102.30, GBP 84.08. ISBN 978-7-5021-9369-0.

Readers of a book review may expect that the reviewer has read the book; or, in the case of encyclopedias and other exceptionally large works, that he or she has, at least, read parts of the work thoroughly and critically. I will confess already now: I did not read this book, except for some 20 pages. The reason? Those pages were in English, whereas the over 1,700 other pages are in Chinese, a language that I can unfortunately neither speak nor read, in spite of several years of fieldwork in this country.

It would therefore be a most justified question if you, the reader, would ask me whether there is any sense in reading this review. Well there is: I know from my field experience and cooperation with Chinese colleagues how interesting and diverse the sedimentology of this country is. No wonder: in a country of this dimension every sedimentological feature exists that you can think of. That an overview of all these topics is now present in a state-of-the-art work, is in itself already reason enough to pay attention to it.

But there is more: the two-volume book has not only an extensive preface in English — which provides a good insight into the considerations that led to the structure and contents of the two volumes — but it has also, in addition to a list of contents in Chinese, a detailed list of contents in English. This makes it possible for the reader to find those topics that are of interest, and to study the figures. Unfortunately, and that is — in my opinion — the main shortcoming of this work, the captions to the figures are only in Chinese. How much more useful would this work have been with captions in English! But such a shortcoming is only relative: which English-language sedimentology book has captions in Chinese as a gesture to the numerous Chinese researchers?

If, however, somebody would dare in the future to edit a 3rd edition (it is not amazing that the editing of this second edition took 19 years!), I strongly advise the publishers to have the captions in English, and, if possible, to add English summaries to each chapter. A few more pages to this work cannot be a true obstacle!

It is obvious that the many thousands of Chinese sedimentologists all over the world will be delighted with this work, which could be published only thanks to the incredible efforts of Feng

Zhengzao, a long retired, eminent sedimentologist and paleogeographer who must have put almost inhuman efforts in gathering all material from the various contributors. Knowing Prof. Feng personally, I am convinced that he not only managed to get all material in a form that fits perfectly in this well-structured book, but that he also performed substantive editing of all texts. And, as written in the Preface, all texts were revised three to five times, some of them even more than a dozen of times. Once more: I am not capable of reading the text, but I am sure that the texts are scientifically correct and up-to-date. Therefore this work deserves attention from the entire sedimentological community, and certainly from university libraries. Ever more Chinese earth scientists are spread over the world, and they may bring sedimentology at their “foreign” university at a higher level by studying this book.

The above are just impressions and personal experiences. But are there any facts that may support my presumption that this is a high-quality work? Yes, there are. Look for instance to the list of contents. The two books are divided in (together) 29 chapters, combined into three parts: (I) Sedimentary petrology, (II) Sedimentary environments, and (III) Sedimentary ore deposits. These three parts are themselves subdivided into chapters. Take part I (Sedimentary Petrology). It has 10 chapters: (1) Petrography of clastic rocks, (2) Diagenesis of clastic rocks, (3) Petrography of carbonate rocks, (4) Diagenesis of carbonate rocks, (5) Dolostones, (6) Claystones, (7) Pyroclastic rocks, (8) Siliceous rocks, (9) Loess, and (10) Seismites: palaeoseismic records in sedimentary rocks. This last chapter is somewhat divergent, but considering the “hot” character of this topic, its presence as a separate chapter supports my idea of a very complete work.

Obviously, the chapters themselves are subdivided into sections. Let’s consider the chapter about what may be the most famous sediments of China: loesses. This chapter has five sections: (1) Introduction, (2) Distribution and stratigraphy of loess in China, (3) Grain size, minerals and major elements of loess in China, (4) Sedimentation of loess and modern dust storms, and (5) Loess -palaeosol sequences and paleoclimatology of Loess Plateau in China. The chapter ends with a list of references. All five sections of this chapter are again subdivided. The last section, about the famous Loess Plateau, for instance, is subdivided into three subsections: (1) Palaeoclimatic proxies, (2) Long-term palaeoclimatic record of loess-palaeosol sequences, and (3) Palaeoclimatic records since the last interglacial.

All three parts, all 29 chapters, all sections are subdivided in a comparable way, which gives me the impression that it must be difficult to find any more or less relevant topic that is not dealt with in detail. I never saw such a detailed book about the sedimentology of a specific region, let alone about the sedimentology of a country like China. Browsing through it and looking at the numerous illustrations is a pleasure for me, even though I cannot understand the text. How great the pleasure must be for Chinese earth scientists. Also considering the very low price, each earth scientist who speaks Chinese should buy this book, if only to be able to tell his non-Chinese colleagues about this wonderful, beautifully bound

work and, not less important, about the detailed sedimentological work that is carried out in a country that is, unfortunately, known so little by so many earth scientists.

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